

Research Activity Panel: Meeting Minutes
Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Friday January 9, 1998
09:00 - 12:00

Introduction of members and guests (A. DeVogelaere)

Institution Representatives

Andrew De Vogelaere, MBNMS - RAP Coordinator
Lisa de Marignac, MBNMS - SAC Coordinator

George Boehlert, NOAA/NMFS/PFEL
Jane Caffrey, ESNERR and ESF
Brian Edwards, USGS
Randy Kochevar, Monterey Bay Aquarium
Deborah Johnston, CA DFG/ Monterey
Jan Roletto, GFNMS/CBNMS
Leslie Rosenfeld, Naval Postgraduate School
Gary Ichikawa, CDFG/Mar. Pollution Studies Lab
Geoff Wheat, NOAA/NURP

At-Large

Caroline Pomeroy, UCSC/CSUMB
Les Strnad, CA Coastal Commission

Guests

Jenny Carless, MBNMS Newsletter

CONSENT ITEMS

Approval of the minutes for November 1997 (A. De Vogelaere)

The draft minutes from the November 21, 1997 RAP meeting were approved as presented.

PRESENTATIONS

Update from the National Undersea Research Program (NURP) (G. Wheat)

Geoff Wheat, NURP, presented an update on NURP and the Monterey Bay Initiative. In 1997, the program funded five out of eleven proposals, with a total cost to complete these projects at \$436,740. For 1998, the received only three proposals, and is funding all of them at a total cost of \$300,000.

The total funding for NURP in 1998 is \$15.5 million, with the West Coast and Hawaiian centers probably receiving \$2.2-2.4 million each. The Delta fund will continue under the West Coast Centers money. Bob Ballard (JASON Foundation and Building) is receiving \$1.5 million, and the Odyssey Maritime Center, Seattle is receiving \$0.5 million to finish the building. NOAA Administration is receiving \$1.0 million.

September 1, 1998 is the deadline for proposals for the final year of the Monterey Bay Initiative. Geoff emphasized that there is a need for increased support (more than three proposals per year) of the program in order to keep it going.

According to Geoff, the NURP budget should continue to increase. Next year's budget may include a Polar Initiative, and further down the road there may be a Sanctuary Initiative.

DISCUSSION

Light in the deep sea: Kochevar et al. review (A. De Vogelaere)

Andrew DeVogelaere, MBNMS, commended Randy Kochevar's report on light in the deep sea, and requested comments/suggestion from the RAP. The following list summarizes the RAP's recommendations for additional topics to include in the report:

- impacts on repeatedly visited sites, i.e. cold seeps;
- impacts on sessile organisms in repeatedly visited sites;
- comparison of distribution and abundance at heavily visited sites, moderately visited sites, and seldom visited sites;
- impacts of laser beams on marine organisms.

The RAP agreed that the final draft should be submitted as an MBNMS Technical Report.

Letter of appreciation for Laura Ehret (A. De Vogelaere)

Andrew De Vogelaere announced that Laura Ehret, who was very active in working with the RAP as it was developing, is leaving the Naval Postgraduate School. Andrew will draft a letter of appreciation for Laura on behalf of the RAP for Greg Cailliet to sign.

Key issues for the Sanctuary Managers Meeting (A. De Vogelaere)

The new Sanctuary Superintendent, Bill Douros, requested that the RAP compile key issues that he can take to the Sanctuary Managers Meeting in Washington, D.C.

RAP issues for possible consideration at the Managers Meeting:

- Involvement in fisheries issues, particularly the impacts on benthic habitats and the potential role of harvest refugia (natural or human boundaries). It was also suggested that an MOU between NMFS, MBNMS, and CDFG may be appropriate to address these issues (we are most likely not the appropriate regulatory body).
- Gain insight on and explore the development of the Sanctuaries Division being the research arm of the Coastal Ocean Program. Related to this may be a discussion of how the new strategic plan, including the research component (or lack of it), will be impacted by the re-organization of the National Ocean Service.
- What is the future of NOAA ship use in the Sanctuaries? Can we count on the McArthur or similar ships to address offshore issues?
- Sanctuaries as places to promote and encourage research to enhance informed resource management.

Some key issues of local concern:

- The issues listed above.
- Developing a stable Research Coordinator position for continuity in the research program.
- Monitoring and understanding water quality impacts in the coastal waters and deep ocean (in addition to the watersheds).
- The key role of MBNMS in long-term monitoring of resources and habitat mapping.
- The continual low level and decline MBNMS resources towards research.
- In terms of permits: what is the shore-ward boundary of the MBNMS, and can an MOU be developed with the California Coastal Commission and others to avoid duplication of effort.

SHORT INFORMATION ITEMS

Verbal items:

The JASON PROJECT in Monterey Bay (A. De Vogelaere)

Andrew announced that the Jason Project will be coming to the Monterey area. If anyone is interested in getting involved with the JASON project, contact Andrew.

Legislation update (C. Pomeroy)

Caroline Pomeroy provided an update on Coastal Legislation. The Assembly Democrats unveiled a "State of Coast and Ocean" report on January 6, 1998 which can be obtained by contacting Assemblymember Fred Keeley at (916) 445-8496.

Anyone interested in receiving updates on bills can subscribe to a particular bill by going to the California Legislative Counsel's web site (<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov>).

Sanctuary Currents 1998 draft program/awards (C. Pomeroy/A. De Vogelaere)

Caroline Pomeroy announced that there is an open slot for a speaker on cumulative impacts of California fisheries. Please pass on any suggestions to Caroline. Poster abstracts will be due at the end of January.

Andrew announced that Mary Yoklavich won the Science Award. After a "closed discussion" and vote, George Somero was elected for the Ricketts Memorial Lecture Award.

Web Page Update (A. De Vogelaere)

Andrew announced that Greg Cailliet wrote a memo to Joanne Flanders regarding the RAP's concern about the web page. The new web page is now up and running at the old web page address, as well as a new address "<http://montereybay.nos.noaa.gov/index/html>".

Written items (no discussion unless there are questions):

Big Creek Mapping Technical Memo (M. Yoklavich)

A NOAA Technical Memo on the Big Creek Habitat Mapping Project is available for anyone interested, and I thank the RAP for recommending that MBNMS provide the McArthur ship time and seed money for this project.

As an update, Frank Schwing and I managed to obtain NMFS funding for three more McArthur cruises within the Sanctuary during different seasons in 1997-98. These cruises are based on the results of the initial survey that the Sanctuary supported (results in the report). We are collecting various physical data to more accurately describe the ocean currents along the central coast (centered off Big Creek).

The other significant study that we are proceeding with as a follow-up to the Sanctuary McArthur cruise is being funded for two years by Sea Grant. We are validating the habitat maps that are included in that NOAA Tech Memo using a submersible and also assessing fish assemblages associated with the habitat maps. We finished our first field season in October and are analyzing the video transects now.

In summary, I thank the RAP and the MBNMS for providing the initial support we needed to get this study off the ground. We all are continuing to get a lot of information out of these efforts.

Sanctuary Explorations: An Access Guide to the MBNMS (D. Small)

UCSC's Long Marine Lab and MBNMS combined resources to produce this document. Copies are available for all RAP Members (and Alternates).

MBNMS Site Characterization (A. De Vogelaere)

The Pelagic Ecosystem chapter by Mary Silver, Greg Cailliet and Judith Connor is complete. Look for it soon on the web page.

Research Institution Video (K. Evans)

The Research video is on hold until the WQPP video is completed in mid February.

Handouts available:

RAP Calendar

MBNMS Permit Report

Sanctuary Explorations: An Access Guide to the MBNMS

MBNMS Newsletter

New Business

Les Strnad suggested that for the "Year of the Ocean," poster award winners at the Sanctuary Currents '98 event present their work at the Sanctuary Birthday Celebration.

VIEWING OF THE NEW ESNERR VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS (B. Christensen)

ADJOURN

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FINAL